



Karel and Mieke Fersel feel distinguished to be honored by the Aruba Tourism Authority

Tony Bennett may have left his heart in San Francisco, but Mieke Fersel will tell you “I left my leg in Aruba.” This is Mieke’s way of expressing that a part of her will always love and live in Aruba, as she was raised on the island from 1948 and the age of two, when her father, Willem Dinnissen, brought her family here while he worked as policeman.

Mieke and her siblings returned to Holland with their mother after her father’s death in 1964, but she traveled back frequently to the tropical island of her youth.. Her marriage to Karel Fersel and the raising of their children stopped that, as it was beyond their means to travel with the entire family, but when they could travel on their own, Mieke wanted to introduce Karel to “her island.”

“I was concerned he wouldn’t like it,” reveals Mieke, “he had never seen anything like before, and perhaps it would not appeal to him.” Their first visit together proved her fears unfounded, as Karel loved Aruba just as much, if not more. They like to keep up with the news of Aruba, and even back in Holland, she makes it a daily habit to read the local papers online in Papiamentu, which she still speaks fluently. Karel always follows the Aruba news in the Dutch newspaper Amigoe

“We love to explore,” they explained, “and we love staying at the Paradera Park Apartments, as it so centrally located, particularly convenient to the Arikok National Park.” It was in the charming environs of the Arikok National Park where Nathalie Maduro of the Aruba Tourism Authority presented the couple with their certificate declaring them “Distinguished Visitors.” On behalf of the ATA and all Arubans, she expressed gratitude for their devotion to Aruba, and that visitors like the Ferels are always welcome and considered a part of the island’s “family.”

Joining them to celebrate their new status were Debby and Henk Steenbergen, managers of Paradera Park Apartments, which Mieke and Karel make their headquarters for their annual three-week stay. Since five years ago, when they first met Debby’s mother Ingrid, owner of the apartments, the rustic and quaint ambiance, and the friendly staff won them over. “All of this is why we keep returning year after year,” explained Mieke, “we talk about other places, and going somewhere new, but Karel always says, “oh let’s go back to Aruba one more time.”.

This “one more time” won them “Distinguished Visitor” status, and also a champagne toast shared with their hosts Debby and Henk, with a special treat, a freshly cut coconut from Ingrid. Congratulations to Karel and Mieke from the staff of “THE NEWS!”